AHLAN

Islamic Insights



From the book "The Emotional Side of Islam"
by *Sheikh Muhammad Al-Ghazali*
Translated and adapted by Haya Muhammad Eid
Edited by Emily Kalharine Richardson

﴿*O mankind! What has made you careless concerning your Lord, the Most Generous?*﴾ [Qur'an 82: 6]

Have you wondered what power keeps the earth suspended in space?

Do you know your Lord? His Greatest Words?

Are you grateful to Him?

Most importantly, are you a believer?

This Islamic Insights booklet sparks these questions and helps you find the answers

This booklet is for free distribution.

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1-Who Other Than God?

The scenes of the universe seen from a space shuttle orbiting the earth are breathtaking, but the most fascinating remains the scene of the earth suspended in empty space.

"*A scene that can never fade from memory*," a Russian astronaut narrates. "*A sphere like those drawn in maps but is suspended in space. No one is holding it. All around it is emptiness…endless emptiness. I was stunned for a few minutes. I asked myself, 'Who is keeping it suspended up there like this?'*"

Who can it be? We, along with the Russian astronaut, ask: Who is holding the earth and planets, near and far, in their spacious orbits, floating without difficulty, without disorder in this vast and majestic cosmos? Who organizes their motion so they do not collide or deviate from their paths?

Not only us, but the Noble Qur'an asks us: ﴾*Say, "To whom belongs the earth and whoever is in it, if you know?" They will say, "To* ***Allah***[1]*." Say, "Will you not then remember?" Say, "Who is the Lord of the seven heavens and the Lord of the Great Throne?" They will say, "Allah." Say, "Will you not then fear Allah?" Say, "In Whose Hand is the sovereignty of everything? And He protects (all), while against Whom there is no protector, if you know." They will say, "(All that belongs) to Allah" Say, "How then are you deceived and turn away from the truth?"*﴿[2]

That space shuttle, with its parts and machines, did not assemble spontaneously; and engines did not run haphazardly, flying the

[1] The Name indicative and all-inclusive of every Divine Name and Attribute of Absolute Perfection: the One God, the Maker, the Almighty, the All-Merciful, etc.; in Arabic it means: The One exclusively worthy of deification and worship. It is important to note that "Allah" is the same word that Arabic-speaking Christians and Jews use for God.

[2] Translated meanings of Al-Mu'minun 23: 84-89.

vehicle in prolonged space travel, without there being an efficiently accurate system designed and conducted by smart scientists. Science and logic refute this.

Faith is not born from a stagnant mind, only influenced by miracles and myths. A faith of this kind is of no weight. An imitated or inherited faith is of no use, because ﴾*Man shall have only that for which he strives.*﴿[3]

There is no striving or effort in imitating faith. No thoughts have kindled and stirred the soul or aroused a will to know, but the faith of others has merely been followed. This would not yield any insights or be deserving of reward.

[3] Translated meanings of Al-Najm 53: 39.

Inquisitiveness about the world around us with a diligent quest for true answers about its Creator is the real path.

Questions about ourselves and this world ﴾*Say, "To whom belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth?"*﴿ are what will ultimately find the answer ﴾*Say, "To Allah." He ordained mercy upon Himself. Indeed, He will gather you together for the Day of Resurrection, about which there is no doubt. It is they who have lost their own souls, who will not believe.*﴿[4]

This pulls the veils away and opens up the eyes to the power behind the little grain growing into a great tree with deep roots and huge branches, which is the same behind the dawn splitting the darkness and scattering the light. ﴾*Verily! It is Allah Who causes the grain and the fruit*

[4] Translated meanings of Al-An'am 6: 12.

stone to split and sprout. He brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living. Such is Allah, so how are you deluded away from the truth? He is the Cleaver of the daybreak. He has appointed the night for resting, and the sun and the moon for reckoning. Such is the measuring of the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing.﴾[5]

Mental and spiritual powers are thus awakened inside us, and certainty in Allah develops as the natural result of attentive and eager reflection on the endless horizons of this magnificent universe.

Every pause and every movement in it declares who its author is. Matter cannot create itself or arise from nothing, and everything working so harmoniously to sustain life on earth

[5] Translated meanings of Al-An'am 6: 95-96.

cannot be the product of mere chance. ﴾*All praise is due to Allah. He will show you His Signs, which you will recognize. And your Lord is not unaware of what you do.*﴿[6]

The human mind naturally recoils from the thought of the non-existence of God. It may conjure up false concepts and images of God, but an instinctive feeling in the core continues to refuse and resist them. Can its maker be a stone, an animal, or a human? And it continues on its search for the truth. It continues striving to throw off the shackles of traditions and inherited creeds.

The Testimony of Faith in Islam "*There is no god except Allah*" consists of two halves that make a whole; the first negates and the second affirms.

[6] Translated meanings of Al-Naml 27: 93.

"*There is no god*" negates any false gods fabricated by human imagination. ﴾*Are many different lords (gods) better or Allah, the One, the Irresistible? You do not worship besides Him except names which you have named (forged), you and your fathers, for which Allah has sent down no authority.*﴿[7]

Some minds have frozen at that part. A second thought will surely make them realize that after disbelief in all human-made gods, there must be belief in the Creator of everything, Who has no peer or equal, the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.

After "*There is no god*" – that refutes all false gods – there must follow the true and great affirmation… except Allah.

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[7] Translated meanings of Yusuf 12: 39-40.

Allah, Whose Power the communist astronaut sensed a glimmer of when he saw the earth suspended in the vast universe, surrounded by emptiness on all sides, which made him shout with wonder and admiration, "*Who is holding it?*"

Who…other than Allah. ﴿*Verily, Allah holds the heavens and the earth lest they move from their places. If they were to move from their places, no one could hold them in place after Him.*﴾[8]

Who, other than Him, has held it there in its place, and the moon and the sun we see night and day without any pillars except those of His Supreme Will. ﴿*He has created the heavens without any pillars that you see and has set on the earth firm mountains, lest it should shake with you.*﴾[9]

[8] Translated meanings of Fatir 35: 41.

[9] Translated meanings of Luqman 31: 10.

2-Know Your Lord

Man may think that the relationship between him and his Lord is similar to that between children and their parents; that they need them when young and dispense with them when grown up. Their independence may even pull them into ingratitude and forgetfulness of past kindness.

In reality, man's need for his Lord is eternal, more than an infant for its mother or a plant for light and water. It never ceases. ﴾*Say, "Who provides for you from the sky and from the earth? Or who owns hearing and sight? And who brings out the living from the dead and brings out the dead from the living? And who disposes of the affairs?" They will say, "Allah." Say, "Then will you not fear Him?"*﴿[1]

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[1] Translated meanings of Yunus 10: 31.

Man may imagine that he can escape from the consequences of wronging his Lord through some protection here or there.

In reality, there is nowhere in the universe where he can hide himself, and no one who can give him that protection. Any refuge he takes away from his Maker is weaker than its seeker. ﴾*Or have they gods who can guard them from Us? They have no power to help themselves, nor can they be protected from Us.*﴿[2]

Whatever faculties mankind has – such as hearing, sight, and feelings – are borrowed from Allah. He may withdraw them any moment He wills and leave the mightiest of all mankind empty-handed, with nothing but utter weakness. ﴾*Say (to the disbelievers), "Tell me, if Allah took away*

[2] Translated meanings of Al-Anbiya' 21: 43.

your hearing and your sight, and sealed up your hearts, who is the god, other than Allah, who could restore them to you?" Behold, how We put forth Our Signs in diverse forms, and yet they turn away from them.﴾[3]

To know Allah is to stand between His Hands, feeling He is what He is and you what you are.

You, with your bare reality, undecorated, without any pretenses. And He, with His Sacred Self, absolutely perfect, and free from any defect, want, or insufficiency.

You, as you really are: weak, poor, and imperfect. And He, as He really is: worthy of all exaltation and glorification.

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[3] Translated meanings of Al-An'am 6: 46.

Without a sense of gratitude, man can easily slip into pride and false feelings of adequacy and self-sufficiency, and ultimately independence from Allah. A belief that man is the source of his own sufficiency! That man is his own provider!

He shuns any reminders of being one of the many needy creatures in this wide universe who constantly need their Creator.

He sees himself as the product of his own making.

He believes anything he possesses is his right, rather than a bounty from Allah.

His own self, in his eyes, gives him power on this earth, and it will empower him in the hereafter. ﴿*And if We let man taste mercy from Us after an adversity that has touched him, he will surely*

say, "This is what I deserve, and I do not think the Hour will occur; and even if I should be returned to my Lord, indeed, there will be much good (Paradise) stored for me with Him."﴿[4]

Why should man think that his name is recorded in heaven and that a place is reserved for him with his Lord when he is finished with this life, if he lives his life ungrateful and unmindful of Him?

These are the delusions and empty fancies of proud minds. This is how souls are ruined and their judgment impaired.

Allah created mankind to know and praise Him, not to ignore and deny Him.

[4] Translated meanings of Fussilat 41: 50.

Allah draws close, with His Mercy, to those who glorify their Lord publicly and privately and do not overstep their human boundaries.

They confess their weakness to Him, and He gives them strength.

They confess their lowliness to Him, and He gives them honor.

They turn from the strength and power of themselves to the Strength and Power of Allah, and He opens for them the gates of supremacy, success, and fulfillment: ﴾*Whoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make for him a way out (from every difficulty), and He will provide for him from sources he never could imagine. And whoever relies upon Allah, He is sufficient for him.*﴿[5]

[5] Translated meanings of At-Talaq 65: 2-3.

﴾O you who believe! Fear Allah, and believe in His Messenger, He will bestow on you a double portion of His Mercy, and provide for you a light by which you shall walk (straight), and He will forgive you (your past).﴿[6]

In this arrogant age, people are disinterested in heaven, and interested in clinging to earth; trusting the seen world, and deriding the unseen world; showing strong faith in themselves, and too little faith in Allah, Who created them for a purpose much higher than that which they have in view or the end towards which they are working.

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[6] Translated meanings of Al-Hadid 57: 28.

They will continue to deprive themselves of heavenly provisions as long as they persist on this erroneous path.

They live exposed to anguish after anguish and affliction after affliction: ﴾*And a disaster will not cease to strike those who disbelieve because of their deeds (disbelief and denial) or to descend close to their homes, until the Promise of Allah comes to pass. Certainly, Allah does not fail in His Promise.*﴿[7]

[7] Translated meanings of Ar-Ra'd 13: 31.

3-Believers and Disbelievers

A disbeliever worships this worldly life, living it for its sake alone, seeing it as the ultimate goal which, if lost, results in everything being lost.

Life for him is the limited time he spends on earth. It is all there is. After this, there is nothing more; and after this home, there is no other home.

A believer is the absolute opposite in his understanding and sensibilities. He is sure that there is a perfect, superior life to that of this world, to which all are heading to an eternal abode.

For him, life on earth is a means, not an end; a journey, not a destination. Here is the sowing, there is the reaping. Here is the racing, there is the winning.

There is a wide difference between the two… one lives to eat, and the other eats to live.

Islam teaches that the life of this world should not be sought for its own sake but for the sake of a higher end. To do the former is considered a waste.

If this life is not viewed as the means to reach the hereafter and the bridge to cross over to Allah, there is no good in it.

Seek this life and possess it all if you can, but without breaking this rule.

Allah did not say to Qarun (Korah), who was immensely wealthy, "*Forsake all your wealth to have Me pleased with you.*" No, retain it: ﴿*But seek, with that (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on you, the home of the hereafter, and forget not your portion of legal*

enjoyment in this world, and do good as Allah has been good to you, and seek not mischief in the land.》[1]

Islam despises the life of this world when it is regarded as the sole hope, and people run after it for no other reason than having it, and filling their hands with it, and then die in its grasp, just as a silkworm spins silk until it dies in its cocoon, without using a thread for its own good.

Islam despises it as an end and glorifies it as a means. 《*Put forward to them the example of the life of this world being like the rain which We send down from the sky, and the vegetation of the earth mingles with it and becomes fresh and green. But soon it becomes dry stubble, which the winds scatter. And Allah is Able to do everything.*》[2]

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[1] Translated meanings of Al-Qasas 28: 77.
[2] Translated meanings of Al-Kahf 18: 45.

This is a clear picture in the Qur'an of how life evaporates from between the hands of its worshippers – just as water evaporates from leaves – only to have their hands closed on nothing but empty air.

What have hoarders of money gained when they withhold it from causes of charity and goodwill? What have they gained when they forget who provided them with it and refuse His Warnings?

What have the adorers of fame, authority, and power gained when they slip from life leaving behind some memories of themselves and their doings, like puffs of wind briefly disturbing the surface of the water before it settles into stillness?

What it is going to be like for them when Allah says to them: ﴾*And truly you have come unto Us alone (without wealth, companions, or anything else) as We created you the first time. You have left behind you all that which We had bestowed on you.*﴿[3]?

Worship of life, seeing it as all there is, is a prevalent error, at which Islam aimed its arrows and undermined its pillars.

Many words of wisdom by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ[4] attack not life itself, but rather the pursuit of life for the sake of life itself, without thinking of Allah or believing in recompense and retribution.

[3] Translated meanings of Al-An'am 6: 94.

[4] May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

Upon passing by a dead lamb dumped by its owners in a heap of rubbish, the Prophet ﷺ asked, "*Have their owners no need for it?*"

His Companions said, "*O Messenger of Allah, had its owners any need for it, they would not have dumped it.*"

The Prophet ﷺ said, "*By Allah, the life of this world is more worthless to Allah than this dead lamb to its owners. Do not let me see one of you destroyed by it.*"[5]

Al-Dhahik bin Sufyan narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked him, "*O Dhahik, what is your food?*"

Al-Dhahik said, "*Meat and milk.*"

The Prophet ﷺ asked, "*Then what does it become?*"

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[5] Reported by Al-Tabarany.

Al-Dhahik said, "*What you know*."

The Prophet ﷺ said, "*Truly, Allah has put forth the excrement of the son of Adam as a similitude for worldly life*."[6]

The Prophet ﷺ further said, "*The life of this world, compared to the hereafter, is just like when one of you dips his finger into the sea. Let him see how much (water) it comes out with*."[7]

His words contain reproach and sorrow for the lovers and seekers of pleasure and material gains, who immerse themselves into them to the chin and remain heedless of Allah, heedless of the hereafter.

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[6] Reported by Ahmad.
[7] Reported by Al-Tirmidhy.

And as lightning flashes, suddenly revealing everything, so will they be startled by awareness, when they bid farewell to this life, believing they have moved into the realms of non-being, only to find themselves feeling everything after death. Only then do they realize how far astray they have been. ﴾*And the evil of what they did will appear to them, and they will be completely encircled by that which they used to mock at. And it will be said, "This Day We will forget you as you forgot the Meeting of this Day of yours. And your abode is the Fire, and there is none to help you."*﴿[8]

[8] Translated meanings of Al-Jathiyah 45: 33-34.

4-The Qur'anic Verse of the Throne

﴾Allah[1]*, there is no god except Him, the Ever Living, the Self-Sufficient Master Who sustains and protects all that exists. Neither slumber nor sleep overtake Him. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who is it that can intercede with Him except with His Permission? He knows what happens to them (His creatures) in this world, and what will happen to them in the hereafter. And they will never compass anything of His Knowledge except that which He wills. His Throne extends over the heavens and the earth, and He feels no fatigue in guarding and preserving them. And He is the Most High, the Most Great.﴿*[2]

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[1] The Name indicative and all-inclusive of every Divine Name and Attribute of Absolute Perfection: the One God, the Maker, the Almighty, the All-Merciful, etc.; in Arabic it means: The One exclusively worthy of deification and worship.

[2] Translated meanings of Al-Baqarah 2: 255 (the Qur'anic Verse of the Throne). Described by the Prophet as the greatest verse in the Qur'an.

The merit of the Qur'anic Verse of the Throne lies in the flowing force of its exalting words, which powerfully uproot and dislodge whatever falsities are on their way to calmly enroot themselves, with the same motion, true belief within the soul.

1. ﴿*Allah, there is no god except Him*…﴾ Nothing in existence goes beyond being a mere slave of Allah. Anyone or Anything, other than Allah, is a slave to Him. He Alone is the Sole God in the heavens and on the earth.

Anyone who claims himself to be a god is a liar. Any person who makes such a claim about a human is a liar.

There have been several eras during which people worshipped inanimate objects or animals as gods. These are truly the worst periods of mental and spiritual decline.

The prevalent error today is worshipping righteous men as gods besides or instead of Allah, under the false belief that they emanated from Him or that He dwelt in them.

This is a blasphemy that brings Allah (the Most High and Most Great) down to the level of man, and elevates man to the level of Allah.

Allah is the Sole God Who creates all creatures, gives them life, and cares and provides for them from birth to death. ﴿*They have taken besides Him gods which create nothing but are themselves created, and possess not for themselves any harm or benefit, possess not (power to cause) death, life, or resurrection.*﴾[3]

[3] Translated meanings of Al-Furqan 25: 3.

The Prophet of Islam ﷺ[4], who is the peak of human perfection, stresses this reality with his supplication: "*O Allah, I am but Your slave, son of Your slave man, son of Your slave woman. I am in Your Grasp. My forelock is in Your Hand. Your Decree over me is forever executed, and Your Judgment over me is just.*"[5]

2. ﴿*the Ever Living…*﴾ Living creatures have no power to give life to themselves; rather, life is bestowed on them from outside themselves.

It is impermanent. It will depart them one day and shall not be returned to them except by the Will of He Who Bestowed it, the Ever Living, Whose Life has no beginning or end. Life is inherent in His Nature. It has been self-existent for eternity and will last until infinity.

[4] May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.
[5] Reported by Al-Thirmidhi.

That is the difference between the life of the Creator and the creation. Therefore, Allah says to His Prophet ﷺ: ﴾*Verily, you (O Muhammad) will die and verily, they (too) will die.*﴿[6] For He Alone is the Author, Owner, Giver, and Taker of life.

It is indeed appropriate – even essential – that Allah's eternal and non-bestowed Attribute of Living be followed by His Attribute of Self-Sufficiency and Provision for all creatures: ﴾*…the Self-Sufficient Master Who sustains and protects all that exists.*﴿ Every breath, motion, or pause in the universe and all creatures is powered by Allah. His Careful, Comprehensive, and Full Supervision covers all their events and affairs. They are the poorest and neediest they can be to Him, and He is beyond any need of them.

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[6] Translated meanings of Az-Zumar 39: 30.

He is the Maintainer of every soul, knowing what it has earned, and the heavens and the earth and whatever is in them. It is impossible that anything slips out of His Control or veers in a direction other than that which He has designed. Every tiny little thing relies for its existence, movement, and continuity on His Supreme Being. ﴾*Verily, Allah holds the heavens and the earth lest they move from their places. If they were to move from their places, no one could hold them in place after Him.*﴿[7]

These two attributes, the Ever Living and the Self-Sufficient Master, destroy any *Shirk* (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship) and bear witness to the Creator's Absolute Oneness.

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[7] Translated meanings of Fatir 35: 41.

3. ﴾*Neither slumber nor sleep overtake Him.*﴿ Slumber is light drowsiness, relaxation, and heaviness, whereas sleep is profound drowsiness and complete rest of the body and mind.

We, as humans, experience hours of inactivity and unconsciousness of anything going on or anything around us. Even while awake, our mental alertness and cognitive performance differ during the day.

With tiredness or fatigue, our concentration diminishes, our energies wane, and our errors increase.

Allah is something entirely different. One subject does not distract Him from another, and nothing whatsoever escapes His Knowledge in the heavens or on the earth. He feels no fatigue,

feebleness, or exhaustion. His Ever-Vigilant Grasp, never for a moment falters, wavers, or lets go of an atom.

4. ﴾*To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth.*﴿ Allah's Kingdom is infinite. It is beyond words or thoughts, as limitless as the limitless horizons of the heaven, and as deep as the impenetrable depths of the earth. Visible and invisible realms of this vast cosmos of unknowable extents and energies all belong to Allah Alone. Those whom ignorant people think are partners of Allah own nothing of it, not even a speck.

Are they idols? Stones or wood shaped by human hands, then bowed to, treated like a god, and some lives maybe sacrificed for, although they are the own possession and making of humans!

Are they humans? These humans belong to their Creator who formed them in the wombs, made their chests heave up and down with breath, and can arrest their heartbeats at any moment He wills, and no one can prevent Him.

The truth is that humans are nothing more than metaphorical owners of whatever they have. Their unreal possessions may lead them to domineer and tyrannize over others, then death comes to them and they depart this world empty-handed, leaving it all to the True Owner, to Whom belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth. ﴾*And truly you have come to Us alone (without wealth, companions or anything else) as We created you the first time. You have left behind you all that which We had bestowed on you.*﴿[8]

[8] Translated meanings of Al-An'am 6: 94.

5. ﴾*Who is it that can intercede with Him except with His Permission?*﴿ There is no intercession for atheists or *Mushrikin* (those who associate others with Allah in His Divinity or worship). No angel or prophet has the right to intercede with Allah on their behalf. Genuine faith in Allah and righteous deeds are the sole means of salvation.

﴾*O you who believe, spend from that which We have provided for you before there comes a Day when no ransoming, nor friendship, nor intercession will avail. And the disbelievers, they are the wrongdoers.*﴿[9]

﴾*Verily, whoever associates others with Allah (in His Divinity or worship) Allah will forbid him Paradise, and the Fire will be his abode. And there shall be no helpers for the wrongdoers.*﴿[10]

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[9] Translated meanings of Al-Baqarah 2: 254.
[10] Translated meanings of Al-Ma'idah 5: 72.

﴾*No bearer of burdens (sins) shall bear the burden of another. And if a heavily laden soul calls another to carry some of its load, nothing of it will be lifted, even though he be near of kin.*﴿[11]

Those whose good deeds will rescue them may, by a grace bestowed on them through intercession, be raised to a degree of eternal bliss higher than that which they deserve. Or those whose deeds have almost drawn them to the shores of salvation, but have not reached them may, by a pardon through intercession, land safely on them.

The intercession of the prophets or the righteous does not have the power to protect against or save from Allah's Wrath. No one,

[11] Translated meanings of Fatir 35: 18.

neither angels nor prophets, would dare take such a stand before Allah.

They only intercede with His Permission and for those whom He consents to. ﴾*They do not precede Him in speech and they act on His Command. He knows what lies ahead of them (the hereafter) and what lies behind them (their deeds). They only intercede on behalf of those with whom He is pleased. And they stand in awe for fear of Him.*﴿[12] ﴾*On that Day, no intercession shall avail, except that of the one to whom the Most Merciful has given permission and has accepted his word.*﴿[13]

But the Plentiful and Abundant Mercy of Allah always precedes His Anger, without the need to ask. Intercession, therefore, is more a gesture of Allah's Grace and Honor in the

[12] Translated meanings of Al-Anbiya' 21: 27-28.
[13] Translated meanings of Taha 20: 109.

hereafter towards those who suffered in the worldly life for His Sake and in defense of His Cause, as consolation to their minds, joy to their hearts, and grace to their souls. Their high status with Allah and generous compensation will thus be recognized by the rest of humanity, with feelings of love and gratitude within the hearts of sinners and the weak believers among them, for the forgiveness and blessings they shall attain by virtue of them.

It is no upset to the balance of justice or suspension of the scales of judgment.

It is of no need to those foremost in good deeds, and is of no avail to those who rejected the truth.

6. ﴾*He knows what happens to them (His creatures) in this world, and what will happen to them in the hereafter.*﴿ Nothing on the earth or in the heavens is hidden from Allah. Knowledge of yesterday, today, and tomorrow is the same for Him. All events, from the beginning of the world until its end, are one open page with everything, past or present, near or far, spread out before Him.

Naturally, the creator knows what he has created. It is unthinkable that a created thing can do something out of sight or without the knowledge of its creator.

Creation from nothing is in the Power of Allah Alone. Changing an already existing matter is the substance of human actions that only happen by the Decree of Allah, and from hence is His Perfect Knowledge of His creatures.

Anything existing is surely known by Allah, which is the meaning of His Words: ﴾*They worship besides Allah that which neither harms them nor benefits them, and they say, "These are our intercessors with Allah." Say, "Do you inform Allah of something He does not know in the heavens or on the earth?" Exalted is He and high above what they associate with Him.*﴿[14]

Every thought anyone thinks, every word anyone speaks, and every deed anyone does of all the past, present, and future countless generations…Allah knows them in detail. Thinking this over, one cannot help but humbly say: ﴾*Our Lord! You comprehend all things in Your Mercy and Knowledge, so forgive those who repent and*

[14] Translated meanings of Yunus 10: 18.

follow Your Way, and save them from the torment of Hellfire.﴾[15]

7. ﴿*And they will never compass anything of His Knowledge except that which He wills.*﴾ Springs of knowledge gush forth from the Will of the Creator, even perception of the things happening within sight and hearing could not have been possible without the tool of the mind installed in mankind.

Acquisition of further knowledge depends on the level of human intelligence, whose portions are allotted while humans are still in the wombs of their mothers.

The universe opening little windows for the human mind to peep through and discover new horizons of knowledge is governed by the

[15] Translated meanings of Ghafir 40: 7.

natural or supernatural means that Allah furnishes.

Yet natural sources of knowledge are scattered everywhere in the wide open book of nature all around us and the life experiences of people. Through awareness, contemplation, and practice we can reach far ends in this arena without restrictions.

Divinely revealed knowledge of the Unseen was unfolded to the Messengers whom Allah chose, ending with the Last Message (Islam). No one will ever receive more of this knowledge, whether through communion with Allah or His Angels, after the end of prophethood. Anyone who claims so is a lair.

Akin to this is the foretelling of future events. This kind of knowledge is not open to humans and has no scope of equal accessibility. Again, divine revelations have ceased. Claims of being given such knowledge within the general meaning of ﴾*they will never compass anything of His Knowledge except that which He wills*﴿ are false.

8. ﴾*His Throne extends over the heavens and the earth.*﴿ It seems to the mind that the heavens and the earth are the boundaries of Allah's Kingdom, which is wrong. They are just some of His Sublime Signs. ﴾*And of His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and whatever He has dispersed throughout them of creatures.*﴿[16]

They are both among His Infinite Signs that testify to His Grandeur and Majesty.

[16] Translated meanings of Ash-Shura 42: 29.

The spaciousness of His Throne is so grand that it holds the heavens, the earth, and His other countless signs.

We do not know what His Throne is and have no power to imagine it. All that we can perceive is the Perfect Divine Sovereignty over creatures, visible and invisible to us, that the word inspires in us.

The heavens and earth are just a small part of the vast cosmos floating in the unknowable expanses of that Throne.

9. ﴿*And He feels no fatigue in guarding and preserving them.*﴾ Allah controls and disposes of the affairs of the heavens and the earth and whatever is in between them without a tinge of fatigue, just as

He created them without a tinge of fatigue. ﴾*With power did We construct the heaven.*﴿[17]

It is Extreme Powerfulness, Ability, and Strength of the Masterful Creator before Whom all meanings of tiredness or fatigue are meaningless.

10. ﴾*And He is the Most High, the Most Great.*﴿ The Qur'anic Verse of Divine Grandeur and Perfection, summarized in the word "Throne", is brought to conclusion by two of His Majestic Attributes, befitting this aura of magnificence, that only belong to the Possessor of All Glory and Dominion.

[17] Translated meanings of Az-Zariyat 51: 47.

5-Thankfulness

Sleep closes your eyes, but power continues to run through your veins and nerves, sustaining life in your body, never ceasing or slackening.

Who keeps them alive, active, and vigilant for you? Who created and caused them to work from nothing?

You were not created because you asked to be, or provided for while an embryo and a baby because you asked to be. Rather, it was the Generous Bestower and Glorious Maker Who did these things for you, out of His Grace. He truly is more merciful to you than you are to yourself.

Thankfulness is a word that – along with gratitude – means praise and exaltation, and herein lies its worth and merit.

What is important is that the tongue utters gratitude while feeling it in the heart, and acknowledging from deep inside that Allah, as the source of every good bestowed, deserves all thanks that is sent.

With every blink of the eye and beat of the heart, Allah acquaints mankind with Himself through the blessings He bestows and the good things He sends.

These blessings and bounties, which are renewed throughout every day and every night, should be received with recognition for and thanks to the One Who Bestowed them. ﴾*It is He Who made the night and the day follow each other, for such who desires to remember or desires to show gratitude.*﴿[1]

[1] Translated meanings of Al-Furqan 25: 62.

If you provide someone with food, give him shelter, pay off his debts, or raise him to a high rank, and he then frowns upon you or gives you his back despite the kindness shown to him, you would perceive him as someone without whom earth would be a better place.

What do you think about the Lord of existence – Who creates out of nothing, provides sustenance and clothing, and showers down His Graces and Favors year after year – when He sees that those living and rejoicing in His Blessings are stern and steadfast opponents of Him! ﴾*He has created man from Nutfah (mixed drops of male and female sexual discharge), then behold, this same man becomes an open opponent.*﴿[2]

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[2] Translated meanings of Al-Nahl 16: 4.

﴾*Say, "Who rescues you from the darkness of the land and the sea (dangers like storms), when you call upon Him in humility and in secret (saying), 'If He (Allah) only saves us from this (danger), we shall truly be grateful.'" Say, "Allah rescues you from it and from every distress, then you (still) associate others with Him (in His Divinity or worship)."*﴿[3]

Ingratitude is baseness. The incessant flow of bounties is just repaid with turning the back to their Giver and disobeying Him in His watchful Presence.

With persistence in such behavior, the right to more is diminished to nothing. Therefore is the command to mankind to thank and express gratitude to Him, their Lord.

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[3] Translated meanings of Al-An'am 6: 63-64.

Gratitude is not a difficult duty that has to be borne with patience; rather, it is the road to perfection that people must walk with determination and purpose. ﴿*O you who believe, eat of the good things that We have provided for you, and give thanks to Allah, if it is truly Him that you worship.*﴾[4]

Thankfully acknowledging Allah's Favors with sweet composure and acquiescence of the heart towards the Maker makes a person worthy of receiving more. Blessings in his hands are like water poured on a fertile land that bursts with flowers and fruits. Pouring more cannot be withheld or reduced. Contrarily, watering a barren land is a waste, and therefore water is cut

[4] Translated meanings of Al-Baqarah 2: 172.

off. ﴿*If you give thanks, I will give you more (of My Blessings), but if you are thankless, verily My Punishment is indeed severe.*﴾[5]

Severe punishment is thus deserved for the evilness of ingratitude.

What will people lose if they enjoy the Blessings of Allah with a thankful heart that acknowledges the Bestower and says to Him, "*Thank You*." Or is this too difficult?

Gratitude is more a feeling than mere movement of the lips, a feeling that was superbly translated into sincere actions and behaviors throughout the day and life of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

[5] Translated meanings of Ibrahim 14: 7.

Whenever he ﷺ woke up, he would say, "*All praise and thanks to Allah Who restored to me my soul, made my body healthy, and allowed me to remember Him.*"

Whenever he ﷺ finished eating, he would say, "*All praise and thanks to Allah Who fed us, quenched our thirst, and made us Muslims.*"

Whenever he ﷺ returned from relieving himself, he would say, "*All praise and thanks to Allah Who made me taste its (food) good flavor, retained within me its power (strength and energy derived from food), and removed from me its harm.*"

Whenever he ﷺ wore a new garment, he would say, "*All praise and thanks to Allah Who has clothed me with this garment and provided it for me, with no power or might from myself.*"

Whenever he ﷺ returned from traveling, he would say, "*We are returning, repenting, worshipping, and praising our Lord.*"

Whenever something happened that pleased him, he ﷺ would say, "*All praise and thanks to Allah by Whose Blessings all good things are perfected.*" And whenever something happened that displeased him, he ﷺ would say, "*All praise and thanks to Allah in all circumstances.*"

And he ﷺ prayed, "*O Allah, help me remember You, thank You, and perfect my worship of You.*"

What plan did Satan have against mankind after he was expelled from heaven?

His vengeful endeavors were to rob mankind of contentment and make them ungrateful.

His vengeful endeavors were to distract them and cover their insight with veils of heedlessness, so that they eat the Bounties of Allah and do not thank Him and see His Grand Signs and do not glorify Him.

When beasts find food, they devour it, sensible of nothing else. When they lack food, they feel hungry, sensible of nothing else. When healthy, they run and jump. When sick, they lie down and rest, sensible of nothing else.

They know no patience with affliction or thankfulness for bounties.

This is the kind of life that Satan wants mankind to live, neither to remember nor thank Allah.

This was the oath of Satan on the day he was driven out of heaven. ﴾*I will surely lie in wait for those on Your Straight Path. Then I will come to them from in front and from behind and from their right and from their left, and You will not find most of them grateful (to You).*﴿[6]

The worst of ingratitude is when it is a collective feeling into which an entire nation slides. As if there is a written agreement among them not to mention anything good about Allah, and to gorge His Bounties and ascribe them to anyone other than Him.

Were previous nations, such as ‘Ad and Thamud, destroyed for any cause other than ingratitude?

[6] Translated meanings of Al-‘Araf 7: 17.

It was said to ‘Ad: ﴿*Remember that He made you successors after the people of Nuh (Noah), and increased you amply in stature. So remember the graces (bestowed on you) from Allah, so that you may be successful.*﴾[7]

It was said to Thamud: ﴿*Remember that He made you successors after ‘Ad (people) and gave you habitations in the land, you build for yourselves palaces in plains, and carve out homes in the mountains. So remember the graces (bestowed on you) from Allah, and do not go about making mischief on the earth.*﴾[8]

The flood of blessings and bounties that flowed throughout their land was nothing to these people. Consequently, they were deprived of what they were ungrateful for, dispossessed

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[7] Translated meanings of Al-‘Araf 7: 69.
[8] Translated meanings of Al-‘Araf 7: 74.

of what they denied, and torment was justified against them.

Mankind is warned not to tread such pernicious paths. ﴾*Remember Me, I will remember you. And be thankful to Me and do not be ungrateful.*﴿[9]

But despite Allah's Warnings, only few are those who acknowledge His Favors or feel grateful. ﴾*But few of My slaves are grateful.*﴿[10]

[9] Translated meanings of Al-Baqarah 2: 152.
[10] Translated meanings of Saba' 34: 13.

6-Submission

Belief engenders submission to the Lord of the worlds mixed with feelings of hope and fear. No wonder, for great persons inspire respect and compliance within those who know them. How about Knowledge of Allah shining forth through His Words, Names, and Attributes?

It is absolute submission, filling the heart and establishing hearing and obedience within, which is the dominant prerequisite for communion with Him.

Faith will not manifest its presence if there is resistance or rebellion; rather, it must be absolute resignation to Allah and perfect fulfillment of His Law. ﴾*But no, by your Lord, they can have no faith until they make you (O Muhammad) judge concerning that over which they dispute among*

themselves, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept them with full submission.﴾[1]

That is the essence of the word *Islam*, from a linguistic and *Shari'ah* (Islamic law) perspective. It does not mean partial, conditional, or reluctant submission. Rather, it is willing submission to Allah that transfers belief hidden in the heart to actions that move and motivate the body and translates certitude into full obedience in both private and public areas of life.

[1] Translated meanings of An-Nisa' 4: 65.

7-I Testify

When you go to court to give your version of events, you are not merely giving information, but confessing to a truth that falsehood may override, and thwarting a lie from prevailing and spreading.

Testifying that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah is the first of the Islamic pillars.

The Testimony of *Tawhid* (belief in the Oneness of Allah) announced in the open is no ordinary testimony.

It is a testimony that establishes the truth and abolishes falsehood.

It is a testimony that indicates your decision to live your life according to a plan that opposes any partners or associates with Allah in His

Divinity or worship and acknowledges Him as your sole Lord.

Through this testimony you are voicing your opinion on many daily dilemmas people contend with. They, in reality, subject themselves to various gods of their own making. Some bow and prostrate to idols of money, fame, power, or authority. Some see themselves as their own god. Some misunderstand the reality of Allah, and some have completely denied Him.

Amidst that atmosphere of incertitude and chaos of beliefs emerges the importance of the *Shahadah* (Testimony of Faith): "*There is no god but Allah*." You are pushing away their falsehood with your statement, exposing their error with your truth, and declaring that you are clinging to this truth. You are not hiding it

within you but testifying to it openly for it to be heard, known, and admitted to.

Uttering it is not only a sign of faith but a declared attitude and a new character imbued into a soul that has known its Lord and decided to walk every path of life in His Name.

The second half of the *Shahadah* is inseparable from the first. Belief in Allah also necessitates belief in all His Prophets, each one of them.

Anyone who believes in one of the prophets and disbelieves in another has disbelieved in them all and in Allah Who sent each and made them affirm one another. ﴾*Verily, those who disbelieve in Allah and His Messengers and wish to make a distinction between Allah and His Messengers*

(by believing in Allah and disbelieving in His Messengers), saying, "We believe in some but reject others," and wish to adopt a way in between are in truth disbelievers.﴾[1]

Therefore, testifying that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah is a testimony to the truthfulness of all messengers over different eras, and the obligation to follow them.

Muhammad ﷺ came in confirmation of all previous prophets. He ﷺ revived their teachings, cleared them of extremist and deviant followers, and exalted their mention in the last as it was in the first generations.

"*I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah*" means I pledge to take him as my good example, hold fast to his *Sunnah* (acts, words, or approvals

[1] Translated meanings of An-Nisa' 4: 150-151.

of the Prophet), and place myself under the banner under which he ﷺ strived.

The secret of greatness in his life was his being a perfect human who reached the zenith of human elevation through correct worship of Allah.

He ﷺ never claimed that Allah dwelt in him or a kinship with Him lifted him beyond other humans. He ﷺ was one of the people whom providence chose to convey the Message of Allah and lead the rows of those who repent and return to their Lord. ﴾*Say (O Muhammad): "I am only a man like you. It has been revealed to me that your god is One God (Allah)."*﴿[2]

[2] Translated meanings of Al-Kahf 18: 110.

He ﷺ was a husband, a father, a merchant, and a struggler and went through times of richness and poverty, victory and defeat, grief and happiness, anger and contentment.

In spite of this humanity which he ﷺ shared with the rest of mankind, he ﷺ lived his private and public life on a straight, upright path with full sincerity, diligence, and devotion for the Sake of Allah. ﴾*My prayer, my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allah, the Lord of the worlds.*﴿[3]

From there comes the good example for people. From a human like us who achieved human perfection in spite of difficult circumstances and a tough environment, people can learn and receive admonition.

[3] Translated meanings of Al-An'am 6: 162.

8-If Not for His Mercy

The outcome cannot be the same for those who do right and those who do wrong. Believing so is unjust. ﴾*Indeed, for the righteous are Gardens of Bliss (Paradise) with their Lord. Shall We treat those who have submitted to their Lord in the same way that We treat the criminals? How do you judge?*﴿[1]

Everlasting joy awaits the pious: ﴾*Indeed, those who believe and do righteous deeds, for them are the Gardens of Bliss, therein to dwell forever. It is a Promise of Allah in truth.*﴿[2] And, painful torment awaits the wicked: ﴾*Throw into Hell every stubborn disbeliever, hinderer of good, transgressor, doubter, who set up another god with Allah. Cast him into the severe torment.*﴿[3] These and other Qur'anic verses clearly indicate that man, by his own thoughts and actions, creates his own destiny.

[1] Translated meanings of Al-Qalam 68: 34-36.
[2] Translated meanings of Luqman 31: 8-9.
[3] Translated meanings of Qaf 50: 24-26.

The ultimate destination of Paradise or Hell is not haphazard. People will reap in the next world what they sow in this world.

Yet a righteous deed must be seen in its true dimension and must not be exaggerated beyond its size. Worshipping Allah for some years on earth is not the true price of eternal bliss in Paradise. He who believes that his acts of obedience are fully perfect and sincere or that they outweigh the blessings he receives in this world (the physical senses and faculties or material necessities) is deceived.

Truly, Allah looks at the good intentions within the hearts of believers and forgives them many things, whether errors or failures. He multiplies the little they do in the same way as He grows tiny seeds into large trees, bushes, and flowers. Were it not so, none would have tasted success. ﴾*Had it not been for the Grace of Allah and*

His Mercy on you, not one of you would ever have been pure from sins. But Allah purifies whom He wills, and Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower.﴾[4]

One should walk towards Allah with feelings of deficiency. His Right is too great to be recognized and fulfilled; and without showering under His Mercy, there can be so salvation.

Suppose people sacrifice their souls and wealth for His Sake? Is He not the Creator of these souls and the Giver of that wealth? If entry into Paradise was their reward, would it not be a favor and bounty from Him?

How many shortfalls and spiritual deficiencies do people see in their deeds? If they imagine them to be the deeds of another person,

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[4] Translated meanings of An-Nur 24: 21.

they might not accept them without much tolerance and eyes closed to their lapses.

A believer ought, therefore, to work without feeling proud, which is the interpretation of the words of the Prophet ﷺ, "*No one will enter Paradise by his deeds*." The Companions asked, "*Not even you, O Messenger of Allah?*" He ﷺ said, "*Not even me, unless Allah covers me with His Mercy.*"

Travelers to Allah, when left solely to their own strength, may be overcome by fatigue of the road and their steps slacken or stop. Reliance placed on divine provisions must be twice as much as that placed on their efforts, just as a farmer plants, sows, and waters the seeds then lifts up his eyes to heaven with the realization that his limited effort is worthless if not surrounded by Allah's Care and Support. His Care is surely the difference that multiplies the yield.